2) Civil cases.

692 I will not assert that Thongas know the exact difference between
622 civil and criminal cases, the same tribunal judging them both and
643 all being called by the same name, milandju.
681 If any distinction is made, it would be between private and official cases, *private cases* being those which are settled by the two parties concerned alone, without the intervention of the chief ; whilst *official cases* are those in which the matter (mhaka) has been brought to the capital. As already explained, the headmen of the village try to settle the difficulties themselves ; if they succeed, all the better, as the fine will be reduced to its minimum, whilst, before the Court, the fine would be doubled and the chief would keep half of it!

691 Ninety per cent of the civil cases are in connection with *lobola*. These are sometimes most intricate and I would refer to the description already given of some of them (p. 282 and Appendix VIII).

691 *Divorce cases* are also common. When a woman has definitely
586 left her husband, her relatives must return the lobolo money.
643 "You must give up to them £ 5 or an ox," says Mankhelu. The
614 chief Mubvesha who was known for his avarice used to arrest the husband and make him pay £ 25 ; he returned £ 15 to the wife's relatives and kept £ 10 for himself.

When money is returned, the children belong to the mother (See page 279).

691 Many cases may occur in connection with *cattle*. The case of
643 *redhibition* is foreseen : when I buy an ox and it dies on my hands
437 from a disease which was not known at the date of my purchase but which already existed, I have the right to go and ask for another in its place. But I bring the skin of the dead ox with me and one hoe inside it for the meat which I have eaten. If the seller refuses to accept my claim, I go to the chief and complain. He will summon the recalcitrant person and say to him : "Did not this man act well when he put a hoe inside the skin ? Give him another ox!" (Mankhelu.)

326 manufactured, and it is evident that, in this branch, Native art is capable of considerable development. Their method of fastening the blades of assagais to the handles with iron wire is also very ingenious. Sometimes they cover their ebony sticks from top to bottom with a delicate network of steel and brass wire. A Native expert in wire work once mended the stock of my sporting [439] gun, which was broken, and made a wonderful job of it. This wire, so extensively used for bracelets, was formerly made by Native blacksmiths, but now they buy it at Lourenço Marques or from the Hindu traders.

D. COMMERCE.

437 Thongas have an inborn inclination for trade and have always been addicted to it. Before there was question of any currency, when hoes were not yet procurable, or the *ritlatla* bracelet brought by the Whites (I. p. 385), or the copper stick called *lirale* (1) melted by the Palaora Ba-Sutho, they knew how to buy (shaba) and to sell (shabisa), viz., to exchange their primitive produce. A mat was bartered for a fowl and the thrifty savage thought : "This is good business ; the hen will lay eggs and hatch chickens and this will bring me a profit (bindjula)." A shihundju basket was also exchanged for a hen. Another way of buying was adopted when dealing with pots ; the pot was filled with mealies by the buyer and the contents left to the potter as corresponding to the value of the pot. For monkey-nuts, not husked, the pot had to be filled twice ; for more precious products, such as sorghum and Kafir corn, half of it only was measured out. I have myself witnessed some transactions of this kind amongst the Nkunas. If the pot broke when first used, the potter had to give another in its place.

439 But this primitive trade became much more extensive when the Whites made their appearance. Delagoa Bay was one of the

(1) Compare my article in *Folklore*, 24 June 1903.

name *Ba-Godji* is still commonly applied by them to English people. After these Whites, the Natives remember the arrival of the Moslems, who came with their "vessels with an elevated tail," (even to-day Arab dhows have a raised stern answering this description), called *mapangayi* and were the first to land and to undertake a regular commercial exploitation of the country. They soon learnt to speak with the Natives, and to make use of them in their trade, sending them far away into the interior to barter ivory and skins against hoes, beads, clothing, and, later on, powder and bullets. 439

Whatever may have been the order of arrival of these strangers, one fact is certain : the Ba-Ronga of Delagoa Bay have acted as intermediaries between the Whites and the tribes in the interior for a considerable time, the Mpfumo, Nondwane, Mabota and Hlanganu (1) Natives being particularly engaged in this trade, and going as far as Mosapa (Ba-Ndjao country) and Bvesha (Ba-Venda country), to exchange goods.

The *commercial journeyings*, though they are now a thing of the past, are well remembered by the old people, with all the particular customs accompanying them. The Ba-Sutho called these travellers *Makwapa* (Thonga pronunciation of *Magwamba*), perhaps from the name of a Thonga chief who dwelt on the Oliphant (see *Grammaire Ronga*, p. 21), or near Inhambane. The company, called *mpfhumba*, was generally led by a *ndjilashi*, viz, "the master of the expedition," to whom the Banyan entrusted goods for barter. This man had to find a certain number of carriers, who would share in the profits of the venture. The Banyans estimated the value of the goods in pounds sterling. Should the whole be worth £ 60, for instance, he put 60 mealie cobs into a trunk and the ndjilashi did the same in his own hut ; on reaching home again, he had to deliver to the Banyan money or skins or whatever he had sold the goods for, to the value of

(1) The people of Hlanganu, neighbours of Nwamba, were renowned as commercial travellers. Hence their nickname: "Ba ku hlomula fumo ba tlhaba misaba." — "Those who take the assagai and pierce the earth." They used their weapon not for fighting but for pacific purposes : the assagai served as a walking stick in their commercial journeyings. Another version is this : "Ba shaba ndlela," — "they buy the road," they do not fight, they would rather pay to be allowed to pass (I. p. 362). 437 481

439 £ 60 ; and, in case of disagreement, the 60 cobs were counted again in corroboration of the contract made. If he brought an elephant's tusk, the Banyan gave him the value of a full lobolo. Carriers received two pieces of calico as reward.

437 After having visited Kimberley, in 1870, some Thongas, having begun to understand better the advantages of trading, attempted to undertake such expeditions on their own account. But they soon gave up the experiment as the Ngonis of Muzila often robbed them of all their goods. When they were working for White men, the Ngonis were afraid to pillage the company ; on the other hand, if by chance there was a loss, it concerned the White merchant. So they preferred the system of trading for the White men.

These travelling companies had to observe many taboos in order to succeed in their expeditions, in particular the *travellers' taboos*, which have been explained I. p. 339.

533 539 437 There are several popular songs which the traders used to sing on the road, or which were sung about them. One of these has already been quoted (p. 102). Here is another in which the tired carriers ask their leader to allow them to return home :

Hoho! hoho! maringele wa mamano!
Hoho! hoho! dla nkambana hi muka!
Hulukati ya ndlopfu yi nga siyi fiwana!

Oho! Oho! Thou who leadest us as a mother!
Oho! Oho! Break the platter and let us go home!
The female-elephant never forsakes her young!

437 The company generally consisted of men only. The allusion to the female elephant, however, may mean that there were sometimes also women amongst them. They address the leader of the expedition, asking him to destroy the platter so that no utensils shall be left in which to prepare food, thus necessitating a return home. They are thinking besides of their little ones left behind in the village, from whom it is unnatural for them to be separated so long. The mother elephant never forsakes her little one!

On their way back, they had carefully to watch a certain bird called *hwati*, fish-eater ; if this bird flew in the right direction, homeward, it was a hopeful sign. If it emitted its cry *kwekweru-kweru*, (kweru means at home), or if it settled on the crown of a hut, then the travellers were happy and shouted their joyful *mikulungwane*. On the contrary, if any member of the company had died on the road, another bird, the *magudjwana*, would come and perch on the crown, with a tired air and drooping head... Then there were tears instead of shouts of joy!

These great commercial expeditions were superseded later on by the *trade in skins* which the Ba-Ronga conducted, bartering them in the interior for powder or other European produce. I knew one Native who organised regular expeditions to Bilene, where he bought the skins of civet-cats with which the Zulu warriors delight to deck themselves. Thence he went into the hill country of the Swazis, or Zulus, to sell his merchandise. It was reported that he obtained scores of oxen in exchange for his precious nsimba skins. The last time, however, the venture did not turn out well, and it has not been attempted again.

Native trade, fifty years ago, consisted also in selling *wax*, and *rubber*, and tons of *nkampfi* (mafureira almonds) to the business houses at Delagoa, (the supply of ivory was exhausted years ago), but this trade has fallen off almost entirely. My impression is that Native commerce has greatly diminished during the last fifty years. So the fact is evident that civilisation, which at first gave a decided stimulus to the commercial spirit of the Thongas, has latterly almost entirely destroyed their trade. How has this been done?

One reason for this decrease in Native commerce may be found in the advent of a large number of Asiatics, Banyans from Goa and Bombay, who are past masters in the art of shopkeeping, and who set up in business wherever they consider there is a sufficient population to warrant the venture. Living very cheaply (rice and curry are their staple food), in any kind of shanty, selling at enormous profits, keen at making bargains, these people

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1" D.10.2., Traders--analysis